

COLUMNS
COMMENTARY

Suppressed sin leads to violence

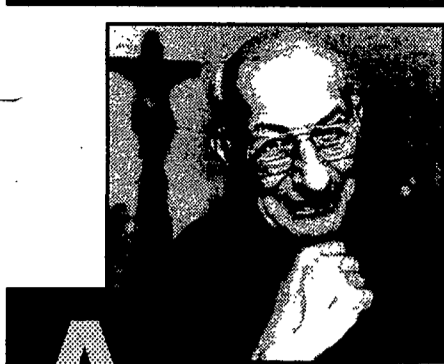
By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 1:40-45; (R1) Leviticus 13:11-2, 44-46; (R2) 1 Corinthians 10:31-11-1.

The book of Leviticus is a book of legislation. Sunday's reading is the beginning and end of the section dealing with leprosy. Obviously, this passage was selected as background for the gospel story.

Leprosy in Scriptures has always been the frightful symbol of sin. As leprosy eats away at the body's health, so sin corrodes the health of the soul, destroying its peace, and ultimately erupting into outward discord. No disease so separated one from the flock as leprosy — "he shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp." Likewise nothing so fractures human relationships, estranges, alienates man from his fellowmen, as does sin.

For all practical purposes leprosy was incurable. The leper in the Gospel, however, had one hope: Jesus. He approached Jesus — a thing forbidden by law; and which no leper would ever dare to do in regard to a Rabbi, for he knew he would be stoned away. This leper not only came to Jesus but he knelt down before



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

Him, sensing God's presence in Him.

He believed with all his heart that Jesus could cure him. But the leper wondered, would He? Would He bother with this mass of ulcerated flesh, this dying, decaying thing? Jesus, who had come to destroy sin, leapt at the opportunity to destroy what best symbolized sin. He did an astounding thing: He touched the leper; then He said, "I do will it. Be cured." Instantly the dread disease departed.

Once St. Catherine of Siena was walking down a country road with her brother. They met a leper by the roadside begging. The sight of the leper so repulsed her brother that he avoided the leper by running through a field. Catherine, on the contrary, not only greeted the leper, but embraced him and ministered to his needs. When she had finished, she resumed her walk and caught up with her brother. He upbraided her for her strange action. Catherine said nothing.

Proceeding down the road, they met a nobleman, regally dressed, on a richly caparisoned horse. This time Catherine fled, whereas her brother graciously saluted the nobleman.

Afterwards, Catherine's brother once more rebuked her for her actions. "Why," he said, "did you embrace a leper, so ugly, and fly away from a nobleman so attractively dressed?"

Catherine told her brother that she could see the souls of both people. The leper, she told him, was in the state of grace; and had she not known there was only one God, she would have thought that the leper, too, was God. But that nobleman, she continued, was in serious sin and his soul's loathsomeness was such that she could stand neither the sight nor the stench.

Would that each of us could see sin as it really is? Would we avoid it? Perhaps not. For we are weak and sin-bent. However we might begin to pray more and to go to confession more often. The leper saw his disease and he saw one source of hope: Jesus. He went to Him.

We too, afflicted by sin's leprosy, have one source of hope: Jesus. All we need do is go to Him in the sacrament of reconciliation. "I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble."

And how do we turn to the Lord? "I confess my faults to the Lord." It is simple as all that — just go to confession. And what happens? "You'll fill me with the joy of salvation ... and you take away the guilt of my sin."

It really is a shame today to see the decline in confessions. No wonder there are so many mentally ill and so much sadness. If you take the cap off a tube of toothpaste and squeeze it, the paste will glide out smoothly. But if you keep the cap on and squeeze it, the paste will break out.

So it is with sin: suppress it, and it will break out in violence, sex, drink, drugs, feverish activity. But go to confession, the normal outlet for inner guilt, and joy and happiness will follow. "Happy is he whose fault is taken away."

BARTOLOMEO FUNERAL HOME, INC.

Peter W. Giullari, Jr. Philip P. Perotto Michael P. Perotto

Personalized service in the community since 1922.

1425 Lexington Avenue, Rochester, NY 14606
conveniently located near 390

(716) 254-5400

TOWER COIN & STAMP EXCHANGE

Specialists in U.S. & Foreign Coins

COMPLETE LINE OF COIN & STAMP SUPPLIES

- Investments / Counseling / Appraisals
- Leading Buyer / Coins / Stamps / Gold
- Silver / Platinum & Silver Bars
- American Eagles for IRA's

Member Facts Nationwide Teletype System

Subsidiary of Bauer Coins, Serving Rochester Since 1880

ANA Member

JOHN BAUER

House Calls By Appointment

546-3810

Mon.-Fri. 10-5, Thurs. 'til 7pm, Sat. 10-2, and By Appointment

New Location: 3400 Monroe Avenue, Pittsford Colony Plaza

Southview Physical Therapy and Sports Rehabilitation

Feel the Difference!

SOUTHVIEW PHYSICAL THERAPY MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN RELIEVING:

- Neck & Shoulder Pain
- Low Back Symptoms
- Tendonitis & Bursitis
- Knee Problems
- TMJ Pain

WESTFALL PROFESSIONAL PARK
880 Westfall Road, Suite D
Call For Information

271-3380

Marian Carracino, PT
Director

Sharing your lives...
Sharing your faith...

Your faith is an important part of your life together. Reading the *Catholic Courier* provides you with information for discussing events in your church, your diocese, your world.

So send the invitations, pick out the music, and subscribe to the *Catholic Courier*.

Yes, we wish to subscribe to the *Catholic Courier*

Name _____

Address/street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I enclose a check for \$19.50

Send to: *Catholic Courier* Subscriptions, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624
or call (716) 328-4340

New Respite Services

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN HOME, INC.

349 West Commercial Street, Suite 2795
East Rochester, New York 14445-2402
716-381-6550

announces

RESPITEWOOD

a home-away-from-home, providing short-term quality care for children or adults with developmental disabilities. Respite is a valuable service giving families a break from day-to-day caregiving responsibilities. A stay can be as short as one day, or as long as 30 days & nights at a time. Through the Medicaid Waiver Program, there is no charge for individuals or families for this service.

TO RESERVE SPACE FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER IN THE RESPITE PROGRAM, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU ACT NOW

Scheduled to open in late March, 1994, the home is currently under construction at 1331 Schlegel Road in Webster, NY. It is a joint project of:

- Heritage Christian Home, a Residential Service Provider
- Habitat for Humanity
- Webster Presbyterian Church
- NYS Office of Mental Retardation & Dev. Disabilities

If you would like to know more about this exciting program or need information about the Waiver Program for families with a developmentally disabled family member, please call

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN HOME, INC.
716-381-6550